



Vital Signs

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Inequities in Flu Vaccine Uptake

More Vaccination Needed for People from Some Racial/Ethnic Groups

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1 in 2

Only 1 in 2 Americans got a flu vaccine during the 2021–2022 flu season.

43%

Less than 43% of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native adults were vaccinated during the 2021–2022 flu season.

80%

Flu hospitalization rates were nearly 80% higher among Black adults than White adults from 2009–2022.

Overview

Flu can be serious and lead to hospitalization or death. Flu vaccination is the best way to protect against flu. Between 140,000 and 710,000 people were hospitalized with flu each year during 2010–2020. People from some racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely to be hospitalized with flu. Compared to White adults, flu hospitalization rates* are:

- **Nearly 80% higher** among Black adults
- **30% higher** among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults
- **20% higher** among Hispanic adults

Vaccination may not always prevent infection, but it can make [symptoms less severe and reduce the risk of being hospitalized](#). Since 2010, flu vaccination coverage has been consistently lower among Black, Hispanic, and AI/AN adults. During the 2021–2022 season, flu vaccination coverage was 54% among White adults, 42% among Black adults, 38% among Hispanic adults, and 41% among AI/AN adults. There are many reasons for these inequities, including lack of access to health care and insurance, missed opportunities to vaccinate, and misinformation and distrust. Racism and prejudice are known to worsen inequalities. In addition to disparities in vaccine uptake, there are likely other factors contributing to worse outcomes for some groups.

Increasing equitable vaccine uptake requires addressing the range of reasons why people do not get vaccinated. Over the past two years, CDC has begun two programs to address vaccination barriers and raise awareness about the importance of flu vaccination, specifically among people from racial and ethnic minority groups: the [Partnering for Vaccine Equity \(P4VE\)](#) program and a targeted [flu vaccination campaign](#) [↗](#).

[Read the full MMWR](#)

 [ASL video: English | Spanish](#)

Challenges

Access: People from some racial and ethnic minority groups face barriers to health care in general and, specifically, lack easy access to vaccination. Last flu season, adults with insurance, a healthcare provider, and a medical checkup in the past year were more likely to get a flu vaccine compared with those without. Hispanic adults were less likely to have insurance. Hispanic and AI/AN adults, as well as adults of other races, were less likely to have a healthcare provider and a checkup in the past year. These data suggest lack of healthcare access is contributing to flu vaccination disparities. Further, lack of access to culturally competent providers remains a barrier to vaccination for many people from racial and ethnic minority groups.

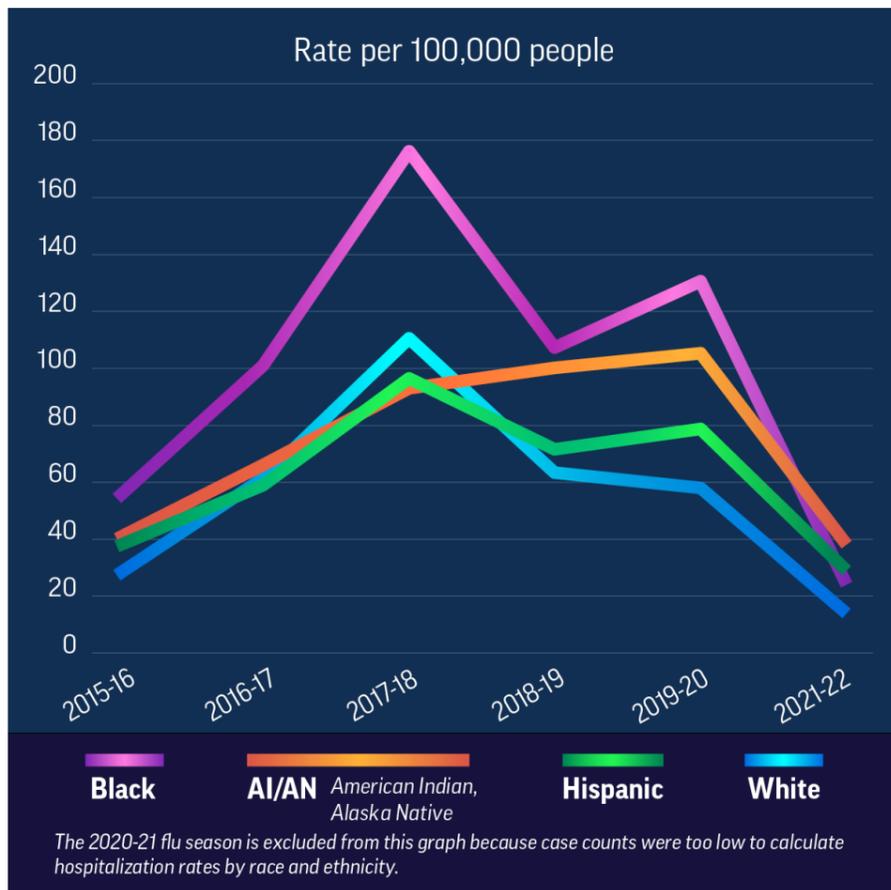


Missed opportunities to vaccinate: Among adults who reported a recent medical checkup, vaccination coverage was lower among Black, Hispanic, AI/AN, and other/multiple race adults than among White adults. This suggests that healthcare providers are missing opportunities to vaccinate people from some groups during routine medical appointments.

Mistrust and misinformation: Misperceptions about how severe flu can be and misinformation about vaccine safety have hurt flu vaccination uptake for years. Systemic racism and historical events have added to a lack of confidence in flu vaccination.

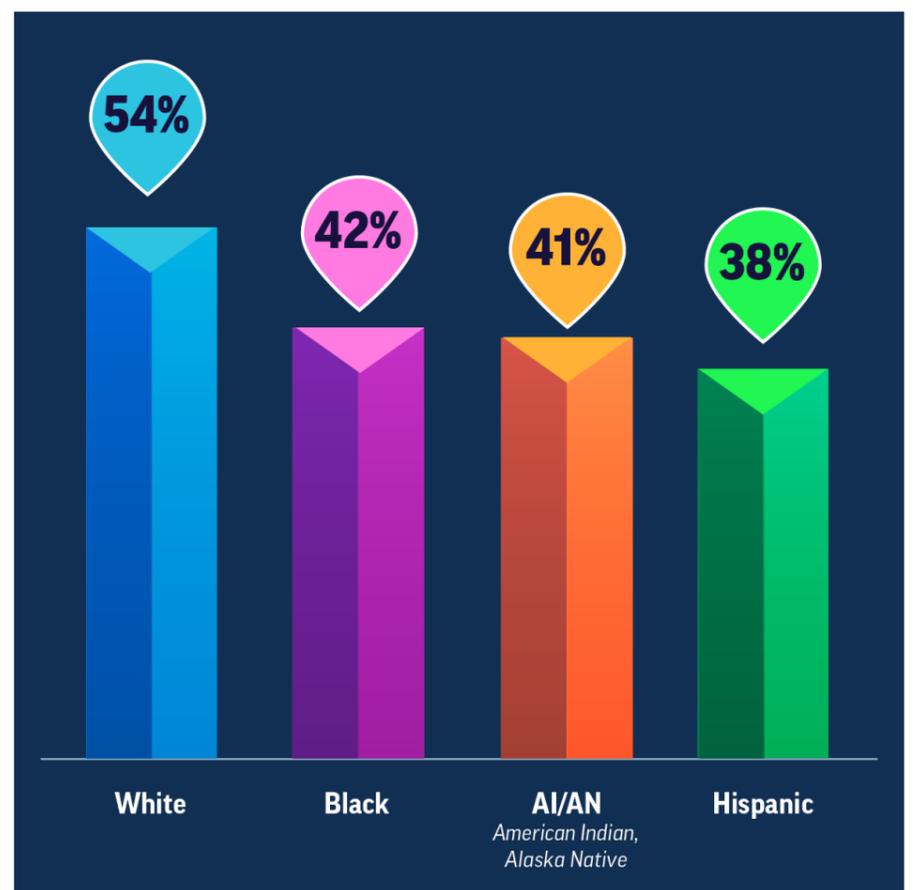
People from Some Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups Are at Higher Risk of Flu Hospitalization

Black, Hispanic, and AI/AN adults were hospitalized with flu at higher rates than White adults during most seasons from 2015 to 2022.



Inequities in Flu Vaccination Coverage Continue

Hispanic, AI/AN, and Black adults received a flu vaccine at lower rates compared to White adults during the 2021-2022 flu season.



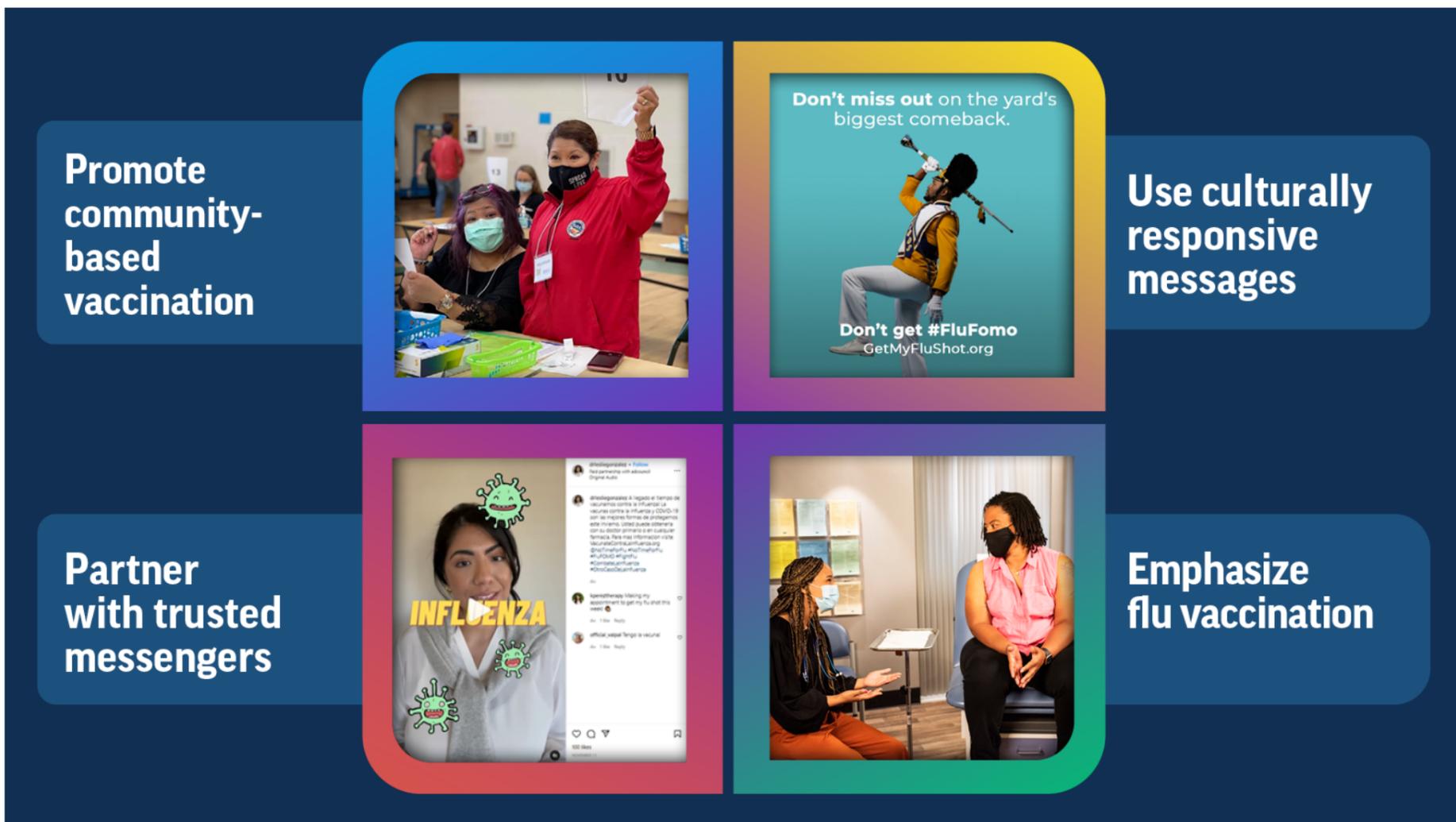
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Multiple Actions Work Best to Improve Access and Vaccine Confidence

Using proven measures may help increase flu vaccination among people from racial and ethnic minority communities.

Credits: Philippine Nurses Association of American Foundation (top left), the Ad Council (top right)



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What Can Be Done

To Advance Health Equity

COVID-19 vaccination efforts have shown that partnerships with community organizations and trusted messengers can help to increase vaccination rates. The Partnering for Vaccine Equity (P4VE) program aims to reduce disparities in adult vaccination. These partnerships seek to build trust, increase access to vaccination, and combat misinformation. Several promising practices have emerged. Working with community organizations to hold town halls, pop-up clinics, and other outreach activities helps increase trust and access. Partnering with healthcare providers and local media channels can raise awareness of the importance of flu vaccination and address misinformation through accurate information about vaccines.

National vaccination campaigns also can help build confidence in vaccines. Campaigns increase awareness by sharing information about the vaccine(s) and addressing barriers to getting a vaccination. The Ad Council, American Medical Association, and CDC have supported campaigns [tailored to reach Black and Hispanic audiences](#). These campaigns feature culturally responsive content shared through communication channels that are commonly used and trusted. After two years, concerns about flu vaccine risks or side effects decreased from 43% to 33% among Black adults and from 41% to 32% among Hispanic adults. These successes show that tailored messages, when delivered through frequently used and trusted channels, can increase awareness and decrease fears.



To Fight Flu



Healthcare providers

- Strongly **recommend** flu vaccination to all patients 6 months and older.
- Check vaccination status at all medical visits.
- Work with healthcare systems to provide vaccines where people live and work.
- Provide culturally appropriate vaccine recommendations, answering all questions from the patient.
- Provide a referral if vaccine is not in stock.
- Vaccinate all clinic staff and educate them on how to discuss vaccination.



State and local governments

- Educate community and faith-based organizations on building trust and vaccine confidence within their communities.
- Identify barriers to vaccination and work with community organizations to remove those barriers and increase access and convenience.

- Host vaccination clinics where people work and play.
- Develop influencer-led, culturally responsive community outreach and campaigns with accurate vaccine messages.
- Partner with media groups that reach people from racial and ethnic minority communities.
- Work with local businesses to make it easy for employees to get vaccinated—for example, host multiple on-site vaccination clinics, open vaccination clinics to employees' family members, and offer paid time off or financial incentives for employees who get vaccinated.



Everyone

- **Get vaccinated today.** The best way to protect yourself and your family against severe flu is to get an annual flu vaccine.
- Encourage others to get a flu vaccine and share [facts](#) about flu vaccines with your community.

Footnotes and References ^

Footnote

*Hospitalization rate ratios compare the rate for adults from each racial/ethnic minority group to the rate for non-Hispanic White adults and can also be represented as percentages. In *MMWR* (from 2009–2022, excluding the 2020–2021 season), 80% higher is indicated as 1.8 times higher, 30% higher is indicated as 1.3 times higher, and 20% higher is indicated as 1.2 times higher.

References

1. Nowak GJ, Sheedy K, Bursey K, Smith TM, Basket M (2015). Promoting influenza vaccination: insights from a qualitative meta-analysis of 14 years of influenza-related communications research by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Vaccine*, 33(24), 2741–2756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2015.04.064> .
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, July 1). [What is Health Equity? | Health Equity | CDC.](#)

Related Pages and Resources

- [Vital Signs: Media Statement – Inequities Found in Flu Vaccine Uptake \[English\]](#)
- [Vital Signs: Media Statement – Hallan inequidades en el uso de la vacuna contra la influenza \(gripe\) \[Spanish\]](#)
- [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\): Vital Signs: Influenza Hospitalizations and Vaccination Coverage by Race and Ethnicity—United States, 2009–10 Through 2021–22 Influenza Seasons](#)
- [Science Clips](#)
- [Equity in Adult Vaccination](#)
- [GetMyFluShot.org](#)
- [Flu Disparities Among Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups](#)
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